



# *the fifth wheel*

JANUARY 2020

[HTTP://WWW.CORVAIR.ORG/CHAPTERS/LVCC](http://www.corvair.org/chapters/lvcc)

ESTABLISHED 1976

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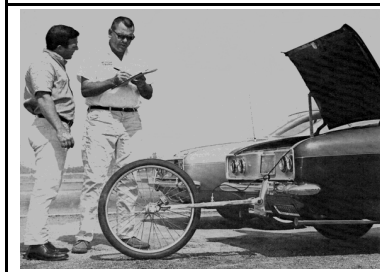
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## Next Meeting! Wednesday, January 22, 2020

LVCC Meeting Information: Time 7:30 PM. Place: Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority Headquarters (LANta), 2nd Floor Meeting Room, 1060 Lehigh Street, Allentown, PA 18103. Latitude : 40.587607 | Longitude : -75.474405. Bring a guest!

Don't get locked out. If you arrive late, the main door of the LANta office building may be locked. But the facility is open around the clock, so ask one of the garage employees to direct you to the second floor.

*The Fifth Wheel* is published monthly by Lehigh Valley Corvair Club Inc. (LVCC), a chartered chapter for the Corvair Society of America. We accept articles of interest to Corvair owners for publication. Classified advertising of interest to Corvair owners is available free of charge to all persons. Commercial advertising is also available on a fee basis. For details, email our newsletter editor, Allan Lacki, [redbat01@verizon.net](mailto:redbat01@verizon.net).

# Steve McQueen's Meyers Manx

## by Ron Peles



The 140 hp Corvair Powered Meyers Manx from *The Thomas Crown Affair* film with Steve McQueen is being auctioned at Amelia Island on March 5 at the Bonham's Auction. Watch the movie. Listen to that great sound of the 140 hp Corvair engine. You will love it.

This I think is the MOST significant Corvair-powered car to be auctioned this year so far and maybe all year. McQueen himself had this car built and he knew Corvairs.

### **Meyers Manx Dune Buggy Headed to Auction**

**by Zac Palmer on Autoblog**

If you're a fan of the Meyers Manx dune buggy and have a lot of money, your lucky day is coming.

Bonham's just announced the dune buggy driven by Steve McQueen in *The Thomas Crown Affair* is going up for auction in early 2020. This auction lot will actually be the second famous Steve McQueen vehicle to sell in 2020, as the original Bullitt Mustang is going to Mecum's Kissimmee auction in January next year.

During the movie, the buggy went on a seriously wild ride along the beach with McQueen driving and actress Faye Dunaway in the passenger seat. As McQueen tended to do, he actually drove the buggy in the movie's stunts himself.

This Meyers Manx wasn't your typical beach buggy, though. McQueen enlisted off-road motoring legend Pete Condos to help build the car. It uses a shortened VW Beetle platform with a modified suspension.

A massaged Chevy Corvair engine was

used - it's said to produce around 230 horsepower, routing that power to the rear wheels via a four-speed manual gearbox. All this power for a vehicle that weighed only 1,000 pounds makes it quite the weapon with a supercar-like power-to-weight ratio.

Here's what McQueen had to say about the buggy back when *The Thomas Crown Affair* was being made: "Crown lives at the beach and he has a dune buggy. I helped them design it, so I'm kinda proud of that. It's set on a Volkswagen chassis with big ol' wide weenies — big wide tires on mag wheels, Corvair engine stuffed in the back ... it's very light, you know (because of the fiberglass body). It's pulling about 230 horses and weighs about a 1,000 pounds."

In case this particular Meyers Manx was to your liking, know that it's going to be sold at Bonham's' Amelia Island auction next March in Florida. There's no estimate attached to the listing for the time being, but we imagine it's going to be expensive.

*Editor's Note: On January 10, McQueen's Bullitt Mustang sold for \$3.4 million at the Mecum auction!*

### **McQueen's Manx Specifications**

McQueen contracted Con-Ferr Manufacturing Company to produce the "Queen Manx," which the company completed in just eight weeks. It started life as a standard Manx, but it included:

A 4-barrel 140 HP Corvair engine. McQueen wanted a Porsche engine, but ran out of budget. He claimed it had 240 hp.

Con-Ferr used an engine adaptor made by Ted Trevor - the guy who developed the Corv-8 conversion for Crown Manufacturing - to mate the swing-axle VW transaxle with its flipped ring & pinion to the Corvair engine.

Special extra-wide rear wheels cast by American Racing that were produced to accommodate the Firestone racing tires from Andy Granatelli's STP Special (#40) turbine car (which almost won the 1967 Indy 500).

Unique headlamp scoops to accommodate the smaller 5¾" DOT approved 12-volt headlamps.

A marine-style, super-short windshield and rails.

Custom waffle-stitched Naugahyde seats and interior trim, crafted at Tony Nancy's Sherman Oaks, California upholstery shop, using Datsun Fairlady seat frames.

Elongated side panels to eliminate the need for side pods. According to HunterDunebuggy.com, Bruce Meyers never incorporated this feature, because it prevented the fiberglass bodies from being stackable.

A Con-Ferr nameplate on the hood replacing the Meyers Manx badge.

### **Home-Made Shifter for a Corvair Powered Rat Rod**

**Posted by: Philippe**

*Editor's Note: Check-out the reference to our newsletter!*

Hi. In a recent post I was asking for help in making a shifter for my 1965 Corvair-powered custom sports car. One of you advised me to think of building my own, which I did. Here



# *Steve McQueen's Meyers Manx Powered by Corvair*





attached are a few pictures that may be of use to folks in a situation comparable to mine.

The system relies on end rod heim joints, an idea I got from the Corvair **Fifth Wheel newsletter**. The system displayed in the Fifth Wheel used one heim and one small U-joint. I chose two heims instead and it seems to work alright.

The assembly is designed to slide forward and aft on the floor of the car. I feel that shifting is pretty tight and accurate. However I will only know 100% when the car will be on the road, which is not going to be for a while.

I should have explained how my shifter assembly works. There is a 1" OD tube (# 1/8" wall) welded to a bracket, the

bracket is bolted to both the transmission supporting mount and also to the transmission itself.

At the cockpit end, the tube is equipped with a pillar which supports the upper heim. This assembly is not supposed to move...except it allows for a small amount of sliding back and forth (hence the slotted holes). The sliding is necessary as it allows for the engine/transmission to move forward and backward when the engine retaining blocks (rubber) get compressed... without affecting the shifting itself.

Inside the tube there is a 1/2" shaft which slides through bronze bearings. The shaft is connected to the tranny via a U-joint and coupling. At the other end (cockpit) the end of the shaft supports a small bracket to which the

lower heim is bolted.

Altogether the system is not all that different from the Corvair shifter. Instead of a ball joint, I am using heim. The main difference is that GM featured vibration absorbing components which I have not...but may one day.

My design could be improved by figuring out a way to minimize vibrations, which I have ignored.

Also in making the slotted bracket designed to slide (on the floor) about 1/4" fore-and-aft with the motion of the power train, stainless steel would be a better material (I have used mild steel).

Yes, my inspiration for this build (which is my second one) is indeed a sort of a rat rod. You can see from the

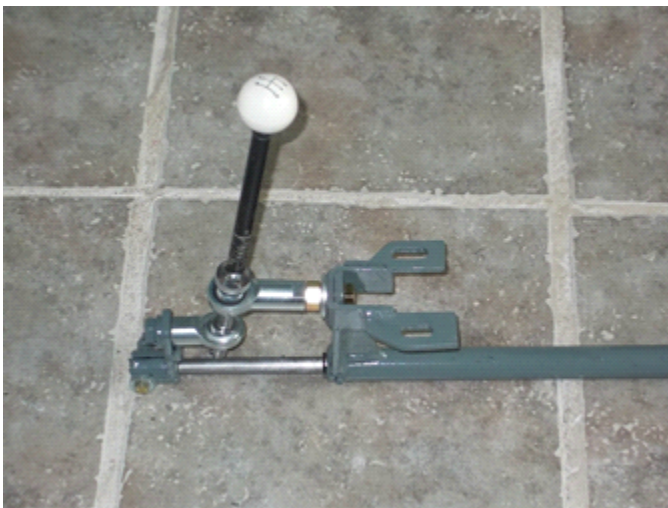
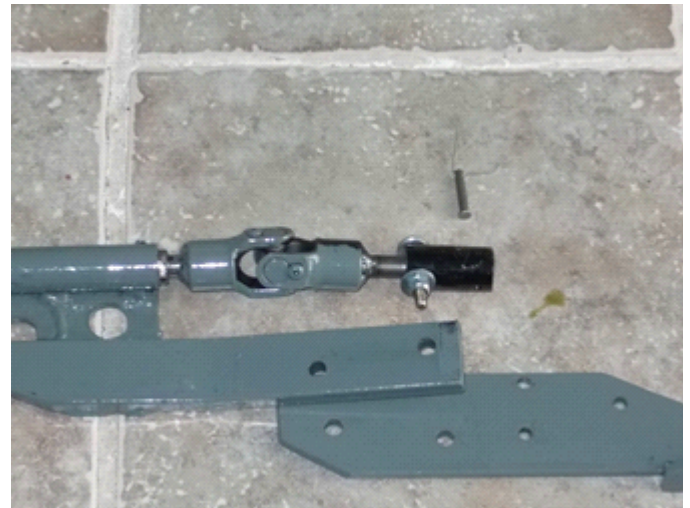
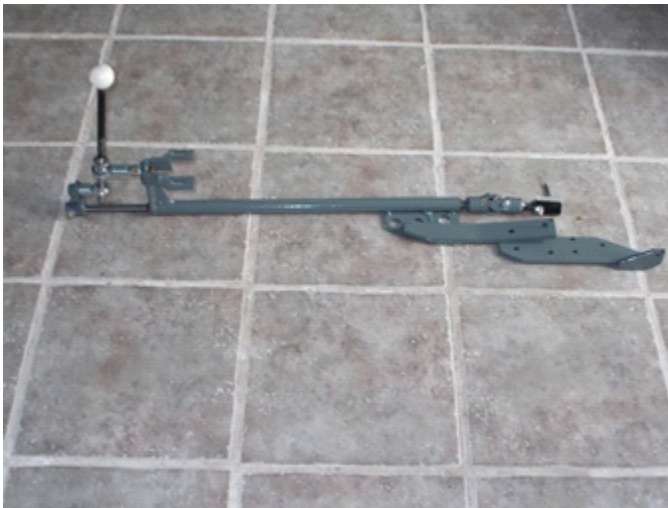


photo that I banged together my own steel seats, some suspension components will remain visible, etc.

At the end of this project I should have (I hope) a lively toy. My Corvair engine should give me around 150 HP. The whole car should weigh about 1700 to 1800 lbs.

But to me what I enjoy most is the process and challenges of designing and fabricating an object such as a car. And this includes sharing with other like-minded folks, which is what I am doing here and on the LocostUSA forum.

## **Annual NJACE Parts Auction**

This year, the NJACE Parts Auction will be held on **Saturday, February 15, 2020 at Ashley's Auto Body, 274 Hillside Avenue, Flanders, NJ.** Time: 9 AM to 3 PM. Admission: \$0.00.

### **What is it?**

At the auction our member-auctioneers offer Corvair parts and Corvair-related items to the highest bidder, with a 10% commission of the sale price going to the NJACE club treasury. You may bring parts to sell, you may buy, you may do both, or you may just come to enjoy the fun. There is always ample entertainment with jokes ranging from

bang-zoom to awful groaners as the auctioneers hawk the many parts being offered for sale. And to top it off, a pizza lunch is included!

As is the case every year, it's impossible to predict the kinds of parts that will be offered, but there is always a good selection. And many of them go for prices that are way, way below those being charged by the big Corvair vendors. For example, sales at recent auctions have seen such items as an NOS Corvair gasoline tank for \$170, a pair of NOS '66-'69 rocker panel moldings for \$150, and a full set of four NOS '66-'69 wheel well moldings for a mere \$90. There are always plenty of used parts that sell at bargain prices, too - often for less than \$5.

### **How does the auction work?**

All Corvair enthusiasts are welcome and invited! All you need to bring is parts and/or cash, and a folding chair on which to sit. Doors open at 9:00 AM for set-up, we begin the bidding at 10:30 AM, take a lunch break at 12:30 PM, resume the bidding at 1:00 PM, and finish up typically around 2:30 PM. Only at that time can we tally the sales, collect from the buyers, and pay the sellers. it. Due to the nature of how the auction operates, it is not possible to process any buyers or sellers until the auction is completed. For this reason we ask that you plan on making a day of it. We cannot accommodate

those who may wish to settle up before the auction is completed.

If you're selling, you can set a minimum acceptable bid for your parts, or no minimum bid at all! NJACE will collect a 10% commission on the sale of parts. You may also donate items for the full benefit of the club.

As a seller you should organize your parts at home, so that you can quickly fill out the Lot Cards that will be used at the auction. You can download and print the Lot Cards at the NJACE website and they will also be available on-site as well. A Lot Card is needed for each part or group of parts being sold as one, so please allow sufficient time to do this before the start of bidding.

On the morning of the auction there will be time to set up your parts and tag them if you have not yet done so. By organizing in advance at home, setup will be easier. If you don't want to be bothered tagging your parts and you just want to donate them to the club, bring 'em and we'll handle everything for you.

If you're buying, you will be given a Bidder Number which will be used to record your purchase whenever you're the successful bidder. You'll receive your purchases on the spot, but you'll need to pay for them (by cash or check, cash preferred) before leaving. For this reason we ask that you be pre-





pared to stay for the full auction, so that the bookkeepers can record all the sales and tally the results without interruption.

### What kind of parts sell well?

Obviously, clean parts in good condition, parts that are less common, and new-old-stock parts. Greasy, broken junk has little or no value, and the auction will prove this to you if you don't believe it. Leave the bent, rusty, broken stuff at home.

We encourage the selling of parts in "lots." For example, sell an instrument cluster and a glove box door together, not as separate items. And we discourage the selling of too many of the same thing. For example, if you have six pairs of cylinder heads to sell, consider offering only one pair at the auction.

### Join in the fun!

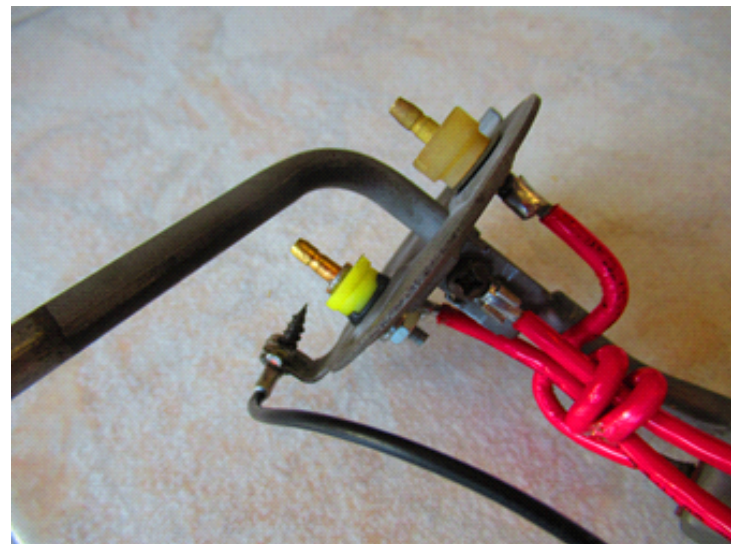
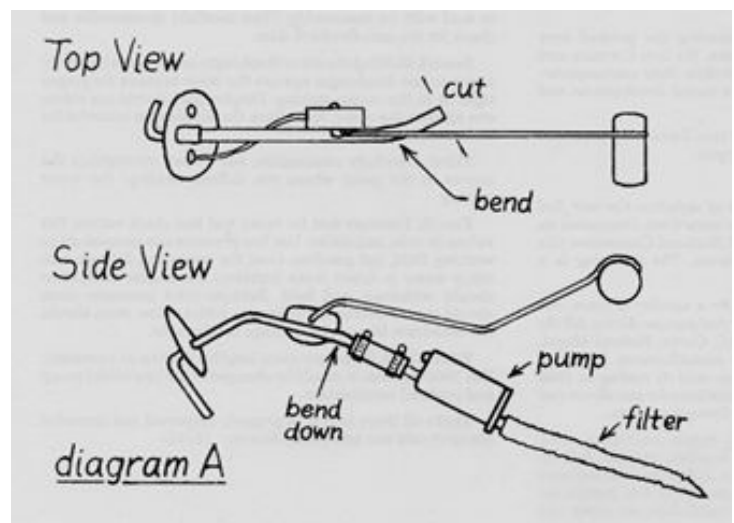
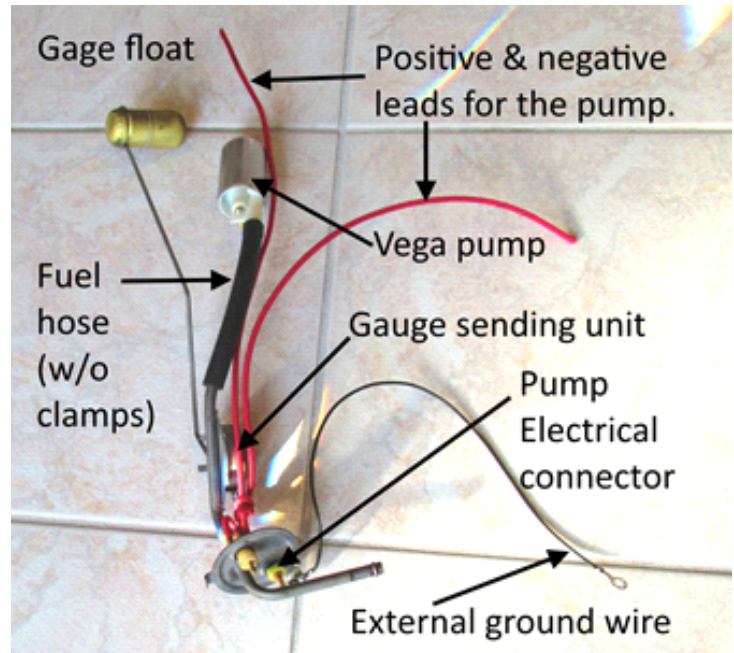
The NJACE Small Parts Auction is always a lot of fun because it gives us a chance to catch up with Corvair people from across New Jersey and the region. If you don't have any parts to sell come anyway - there are always great bargains to be had and there are always plenty of laughs. The auction is a great way to see a lot of unusual parts and enjoy the competitive bidding. If you're looking for something in particular chances are good that you'll find it there. The best part about the auction is a chance to get together with a great bunch of people.

### **Vega Fuel Pump for Corvairs** **by Allan Lacki**

Electric fuel pumps. We've all read articles about replacing the Corvair's mechanical fuel pump with a modern electric fuel pump. The experts recommend mounting them next to the gas tank, at the front-end of the car, in a protected location. Clark's offers a complete electric fuel pump kit on Page 66 of its catalog.

My buddy Brian O'Neill prefers an in-tank fuel pump. He's had one in his Corvair for the past eighteen years and it hasn't failed yet. And unlike the external pumps, it's completely silent. He's now in the process of rebuilding a 1961 Monza Sedan. So, once again, he's going with an in-tank pump.

Brian got the idea from the CORSA Tech Guide. It has an article about installing a Chevy Vega electric fuel pump in a Corvair. The same article also appeared in the February 1987 issue of the *CORSA Communique*. Yes, the Vega fuel pump was an in-tank unit. And they are still available at your friendly local auto parts store.



## ***NEXT MEETING: JANUARY 22, 2020***

The nice thing about an in-tank fuel pump is that it's out of the way from harm, and because it's a "pusher" rather than a "sucker", it's less prone to vapor lock.

The downside is that, in order to install one, the gas tank must be completely empty. No problem in this case; Brian ordered a repro fuel tank from Clarks, and that will serve as the pump's home.

The installation takes a bit of doing. It makes use of the standard Corvair fuel gauge sending unit. I'll spare you the details, but suffice to say it entails drilling, soldering and a bit more.

We found out the hard way that Clark's repro fuel gage sending unit is made of an extremely hard variety of stainless steel which is impossible to drill even with titanium drill bits. So, we made do with the '61's original sending unit, (which still works).

Shown here are photos of the unit. It wasn't finished when these photos were taken. The wires to the pump had not yet been attached and the fuel filter sock had not yet been installed. The clamps for the fuel hose had not been installed either. But it will give you an idea of how it all comes together. (All these things have since been completed).

A couple of hints: Naturally, we used fuel-resistant electric wire. The insula-

tion is very stiff, so it's hard to bend it so it lays where it should. On the other hand, it makes a dandy wire tie, which you can see in the photo. We figured that, once submerged in gasoline, a regular plastic wire tie would melt.

Speaking of wires, it must be noted that the positive and negative wires need to be attached to the positive and negative terminals on the pump. Otherwise, the pump will suck air into the tank instead of pushing gasoline to the carburetors. Aside from the humorous aspect, this has a tendency to burn out the pump in short order. The electric motor in the pump relies on gasoline for cooling.

Not shown: Brian has an old fuel tank that he cut in half so that we could see how the pump would fit when installed in the new repro tank. This enabled us to make sure the suction-end of the pump would be just above the bottom of the tank in the final installation.

### ***Trunk Lock Mystery*** ***By Allan Lacki***

Every holiday season, I hide Christmas gifts in the trunk of my Corvair. Safe, secure and perfect for keeping secrets. So, in keeping with the tradition, I did the same this year.

Imagine my surprise Christmas Eve

when the trunk wouldn't open! No matter how hard I turned the key, the lock wouldn't budge. Christmas will be ruined!

It worked fine just a day or two before? What could have happened?

So, I went for the gusto. I inserted the key into the lock and gave it an extra twist with my trusty pair of lock-joint pliers. I knew full-well that I could have broken the key in the lock, in which case I'd have to go through the headlight bucket. But what was the alternative?

It worked! With the extra twist of the key, I was able to open the trunk, dig out the presents, and put them under the Christmas tree, just in time. Whew!

It seems that the little tiny spring that attaches the lock tumbler to the latch went missing. The latch would still work but barely because the spring was gone. I have no idea where it went. But all that panic for want of a ten-cent piece!

(Actually, \$2.40 at Clarks...)



## **Clark's Corvair Parts®**

Our catalog lists over 15,000 parts for your Corvair. We carry engine parts, body panels, upholstery and much more! There are 1,000's of reproduced items available, pages of technical information and lots of other helpful hints.



## ***Calendar of Local Events***

### **Friday to Sunday, January 17 to 19, 2020 :::: Auto Mania**

Location: Allentown PA Fairgrounds, 302 N 17th Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18104. January 17 from Noon to 9 PM. January 18 from 9 AM to 6 PM. January 19 from 9 AM to 3 PM. Price: \$10 daily. Event Info: Pennsylvania's largest indoor heated automotive flea market. Pickers, flippers, investors and collectors can get their share of the fresh merchandise. Contact Info: Phone: (717) 243-7855. Email: [info@carlisleevents.com](mailto:info@carlisleevents.com) <https://www.carlisleevents.com/events/events-detail/index?id=auto+mania>

### **Saturday, January 18, 2020 :::: Jacktown Annual Antique Engine Show**

Location: Jacktown Grove, 1229 Richmond Road, Bangor, PA. Time: 8 AM to 4 PM. Snow or shine. Free admission. Great display of operational antique gas and steam engines. Presented by the Blue Mountain Antique Gas & Steam Engine Association. Food available on the grounds. Come out and enjoy the fun by the bonfire. For more information, call (610) 588-6900 or visit [www.jacktown.org](http://www.jacktown.org).

### **Saturday & Sunday, February 15 to February 16, 2020 :::: Motorama Custom Car, Truck and Bike Show**

Location: PA Farm Show Complex, 2300 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA. February 15 from 9 AM to 10 PM. February 16 from 9 AM to 5 PM. Event Info: Open to all American, Japanese and European vehicles. This is a judged show where cash prizes and trophies will be awarded. See hundreds of the nation's top touring show vehicles from the early 1900's to today's modern marvels; antiques, classic muscle, exotics, lead sleds, modern muscle, movie cars, rat rods, tuners and so much more. Hosted alongside an additional 800,000 square feet of motorsports racing and events. Live, indoor racing includes karting, 1/4 midget, motocross, R/C events, and more. Phone: (717) 359-7056 <https://motoramaevents.com/>

### **Saturday, February 15, 2020 :::: NJACE Corvair Parts Auction**

Location: Indoors at Ashley's Auto Body, 274 Hillside Avenue, Flanders, NJ. Time: 9 AM to 3 PM. Admission: \$0.00. All Corvair enthusiasts are welcome! Corvair parts and Corvair-related items are sold to the highest bidder, with a 10% commission of the sale price going to the club treasury. You may bring parts to sell, you may buy, you may do both, or you may just come to enjoy the fun. Doors open 9:00 AM for set-up, bidding begins at 10:30 AM. Pizza lunch is included! For complete auction details click here. For Auction Lot Cards click here. (A "snow date" of February 22 will be used if the weather is truly bad.)

### **Saturday & Sunday, February 15 to February 16, 2020 :::: Motorama Racing**

Location: PA Farm Show Complex, 2300 N. Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA. February 15 from 9 AM to 10 PM. February 16 from 9 AM to 5 PM. Event Info: The nation's largest all indoor racing event and live show featuring 1 million square feet of action. The schedule includes full-size and radio-control races including arenacross racing, go kart racing, quarter midget racing, RC off road racing, RC scaled trials, RC oval racing, RC demolition derby, robot conflict, and a Ms. Motorama competition. Register online here: <https://motoramaevents.com/>

### **Sunday March 1, 2020 :::: Hamburg Swap Meet and Car Corral**

Location: Hamburg Fire Co. Field House, 127 South Fourth St. (rear), Hamburg, PA. Time: 7 AM to 2 PM. Event Info: Over 100 indoor spaces with unlimited outdoor spaces, handicap friendly, refreshments available. Held rain or shine. Adults \$2, children under 12 free. For vendor spaces or general information call 610-823-4656. <http://ontelaunee.aaca.com/hamburg-swap-meet/>

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